

Danesgate Community

Danesgate, Fulford Cross, York, North Yorkshire, YO10 4PB

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has a clear view of how successful the centre can be and has created consistently high expectations across the diverse provisions that form Danesgate Community. At the time of the last inspection, many of the actions identified to improve the centre had just been implemented. These are now well established and result in significantly improved outcomes for pupils.
- Teaching has improved and is consistently good. As a result, although attainment remains below average, pupils make good progress from their different starting points and achievement is good. Those with a statement of special educational needs achieve particularly well.
- As pupils re-engage with learning, they are supported by high quality information, advice and guidance that helps a very high proportion to move into education, training or employment when they leave.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils is good. Pupils are generally polite and courteous to each other. Individual learning plans support pupils' needs as they develop strategies to manage their own behaviour. Time lost for exclusions has reduced significantly. Pupils feel safe, they develop good attitudes to work and the attendance of most pupils improves rapidly.
- Leaders, including the management committee, have a very good knowledge and understanding of the Danesgate Community. They have established a clear focus on school improvement based on meeting the needs of individuals, strong partnerships and clear plans to support their commitment to improving pupil's life chances. This has led to sustained improvement in the quality of teaching and pupil achievement since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and does not contribute to outstanding learning and achievement. Learners are not always challenged to make the maximum progress in some lessons.
- The low attendance of some pupils impacts on their learning and development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 26 lessons taught by teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals of which three were joint observations with the headteacher and achievement manager. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to lessons and personalised education sessions. They observed pupils attending the two off-site primary centres, as well as at alternative learning provisions at the Lighthouse Centre and the York Boxing Club.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff, the Chair and vice-chair of the Management Committee, alternative curriculum providers, a parent and representatives from the local authority. Discussions took place with individual pupils in lessons as well as at break and lunchtime.
- The inspectors observed the centre’s work, and looked at pupils’ work and information on their progress. Safeguarding records and other documents were evaluated. There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire for the lead inspector to assess, so telephone conversations were held with a small sample of parents. Responses from the questionnaire for staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Keith Massett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Danesgate Community provides small group and personalised education programmes mostly for pupils who have been permanently excluded and those at risk of exclusion, on short or long-term placements, due to their behavioural, social and emotional needs. It operates an outreach service for the primary and secondary schools in York and for other pupils who cannot attend mainstream school.
- The primary provision has been expanded since the previous inspection and includes two off-site centres.
- There are collaborative arrangements with York secondary schools, Askham Bryan Further Education College and York College of Further Education for the delivery of 14-19 vocational courses on the Danesgate Community site. Programmes for individual learning are provided in partnership with the youth service and work-based learning with the Joseph Trust at Rossmore Grange Farm and with the Jack Raine Community Foundation at York Boxing Club.
- Most pupils are White British and a large majority are boys. A small number are pupils looked after by the local authority and there are a few from Traveller families.
- The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or are undergoing assessment is increasing.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is high.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding and further improves outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently use all the available information about how well pupils are doing, so that learning activities are closely matched to individual pupils' needs, improving written feedback within teachers' marking to match the level of the oral feedback that pupils are given
 - consistently providing opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in subjects other than English
 - improving attendance, especially of the small group of pupils who although their attendance has improved are still absent too often.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The good progress that pupils make at Danesgate Community, whatever their starting point means that achievement is good.
- Attainment is below average on entry, often as a result of pupils' disrupted educational experiences prior to arriving at the centre. Data indicates that pupils now enter with lower attainment than at the time of the last inspection and increasingly complex needs. Low levels of attainment in literacy on pupils' entry to the school is a significant barrier to improving pupils' achievement.
- Attainment remains below average when pupils leave but their good progress means the gaps are closing between how well these pupils are doing and pupils nationally. By the time pupils leave in Year 11 almost all have re-engaged with education and a very high proportion move to education, employment or training.
- Achievements of pupils who stay at the centre until the end of Key Stage 4 are good. Pupils achieve appropriate accreditation that will enhance their chances in life beyond school. More pupils are achieving national benchmarks for five A*-G and almost all achieve at least one GCSE qualification. Achievement in English and mathematics is good. GCSE results have improved each year for the last three years.
- The school's data and inspection findings indicate that there is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, from Traveller families or those looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils of all ages who have a statement of special educational needs achieve particularly well. For example, almost half achieved five A*-G in 2012 GCSE examinations. Pupils generally exceed predictions from mainstream school and the targets set by the centre.
- Key Stage 3 and primary pupils often stay for shorter periods but make equally good progress. About half reach the nationally expected levels in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 9. In national tests in 2012, some Key Stage 2 pupils made outstanding individual progress in English and good progress overall. Progress rates increase for pupils who spend more time at the centre.
- Pupils who find it more difficult to be involved in their education are well supported by the one-to-one learning and the alternative provision from out of school providers enabling more pupils to re-engage with learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well. The areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection to, for example, improve teachers' planning, have been well addressed.
- Thorough procedures to accurately establish the ability of each pupil on entry to the school are in place. This is used alongside information from the pupils' previous school and national tests to set challenging targets.
- Planning ensures a good range of appropriate learning activities and work is usually well matched to the needs of pupils. However, this is not fully consistent and in some lessons, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Each pupil has an individual learning programme, following either a small group or personalised programme ensuring their social and emotional needs are well met. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Staff set high expectations and there is consistency across all the provisions and in the alternative settings.
- The good teaching and high quality learning environment, particularly in the skills centre, ensure that pupils are interested and engaged in lessons. The learning environment in the more recently established primary provisions is not always as well developed or engaging.

- Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good overall and ensures pupils are well prepared for their return to mainstream school. Some of the teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding. In one well planned lesson pupils enjoyed a practical task. High quality questioning ensured they developed a range of literacy skills alongside other important skills such as working together, managing their own behaviour and following health and safety rules. This quality of teaching is not yet consistent across the different settings for pupils of this age.
- Teaching for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is consistently good. Staff use their good subject knowledge effectively. Specialist teachers for vocational subjects use knowledge of the workplace to ensure pupils gain a wide range of appropriate skills and experiences. Good practice was seen in a catering lesson where pupils planned and worked together to make a variety of meals in the professional standard kitchen. They then gained additional experience as they helped to prepare and serve the meals to staff and pupils in the centre canteen.
- Staff consistently provide good verbal feedback to pupils on their learning. Useful written comments to help pupils understand precisely what is required to improve their work is provided by some teachers, but is generally a less well developed part of teachers' marking. Good development of pupils' literacy skills was seen in some lessons. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to support pupils' progress in their literacy skills across a range of subjects.
- Teaching assistants and other support staff work in close partnership with teachers and they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and behaviour management.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils make significant progress in improving their behaviour and attitudes to learning. They are usually polite and courteous to each other.
- The positive learning environment and nurturing approach adopted by all staff typically enable most pupils to settle well into the centre. They quickly learn new routines and respond well to the high expectations of how to behave in an appropriate manner towards staff and other pupils. They are proud of the centre and treat the environment with the utmost respect.
- Pupils' good behaviour in lessons enables the teachers to focus on teaching and pupils to learn more effectively.
- Staff are skilled at managing behaviour and apply different behaviour management methods consistently. Exclusions for serious incidents have reduced as pupils are taught more effectively how to deal with difficult situations and better manage their own behaviour. Records show that there has been an improvement in behaviour and a significant reduction in exclusions over the past three years.
- Safeguarding is a high priority and pupils say they feel safe at the centre and when visiting off-site activities. Thorough systems have been established to ensure the safety of pupils attending off-site learning, with the same high expectations and consistency of practice as seen at the centre.
- Pupils are well informed about the different types of bullying and were happy to share their knowledge and experiences with inspectors. Pupils and parents confirm that there is little evidence of bullying but if it does occur it is dealt with effectively.
- Behaviour around the centre is good. Pupils are mostly very polite and respond well to visitors and pupils from other schools attending the skills centre. Behaviour observed in the canteen was exemplary and there are good opportunities to interact and develop social skills with staff and other pupils in an informal setting.
- Vocational programmes enable pupils to develop a wide range of skills and develop behaviour that will support them at college or in the workplace when they leave.
- Attendance improves rapidly compared to pupils' previous attendance in mainstream school. Many pupils have experienced long periods out of school before being placed at the centre. The centre has maintained an upward trend in attendance levels over the last three years. However, the persistent absence of a small minority of pupils means that overall attendance remains low.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has demonstrated outstanding leadership in expanding provision and establishing the high expectations and common practices that are in place across the diverse provisions that form the Danesgate Community. This has ensured good outcomes for pupils.
- The re-structured leadership team ensure that the focus on improving outcomes for pupils is at the heart of developments. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher effectively support the drive for improvement. The extended leadership team have contributed very effectively to provision in areas such as data management, staff professional development and support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection, plans to drive improvement and develop teaching have been successfully implemented. Staff development is a priority supported by robust observation of teaching, professional development and performance management.
- The schools procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are robust and highly accurate, especially in the analysis of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Performance pay is used effectively and supports the implementation of good plans for continued improvement.
- English and mathematics subject leaders ensure a consistent approach to the teaching and improved outcomes in these subjects. However, the development of literacy skills in other subjects is inconsistent.
- Very strong partnerships highlight the centre's commitment to improving pupils' life chances. They engage a wide range of partnerships often leading the developments at a strategic level. Partnerships with alternative providers ensure more opportunities for the harder to engage pupils. The local authority provides good support and there is a strong partnership with the headteacher to develop city wide practice.
- The curriculum is well planned and together with partners, the school meets the needs and interests of learners. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 enables pupils to be successfully re-integrated into mainstream school. Curriculum provision in Years 7 to 11 ensures pupils swiftly re-engage in learning. Pupils enjoy the added focus on vocational activities such as construction, land based studies, catering and hair and beauty courses and this supports progression when they leave.
- Leaders ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well established across the curriculum. This is well supported by the 'opening minds' curriculum with younger pupils and the breadth of courses for older pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee have a very good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement at Danesgate Community. Its membership is reflective of the local school community and partner agencies. They have established an effective model of full management committee and sub-committees meetings that have enabled them to inform and support the headteacher's view of how the school will develop and challenge actions appropriately. There is robust monitoring of the school improvement plan and the statutory duties of the committee, such as safeguarding. The committee is well placed to incorporate the additional responsibilities of governance, such as financial management, from 2013.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121270
Local authority	York
Inspection number	406011

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Sheila Bridge
Headteacher	Tricia Head
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2010
Telephone number	01904 642611
Fax number	01904 642613
Email address	pupil@york.gov.uk

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